

## **TRANSCRIPT of 2013 Albany Matchmaker Workshop: *Making the Matchmaker Work for You* - May 23**

This is the 2013 Albany Matchmaker webinar series and this first workshop is about making the matchmaker work for you with tips and guidelines so you can have the most successful day possible. I'll go through the slides and there will be time at the end of the presentation for questions.

My name is Erica Choi, and I'm with the SBA Syracuse District Office though my office is in Albany. My email address is [erica.choi@sba.gov](mailto:erica.choi@sba.gov) and my phone number is 518-446-1118 ext. 231. Please feel free to reach out to me after the call today with any additional questions.

We'll talk about logistics in this workshop: what do you do before the event, at the event, and how to follow up. First let's talk about prior to the matchmaker and how you can be ready. Many of you are probably already registered and that might be how you know about the event. Even if you are not registered, we'll talk about that as well. So prior to the event, if you decide that you would like to attend the 2013 matchmaker, there's a place on our website where you can register. We have on our website a buyer listing that is going to show you all the buyers that are going to be at the event, what products and services they are looking to buy. This allows you to look at the list and select the buyers that make the most sense for you.

If you have already registered, you may not have selected your meetings at this time. The buyer listing I am going to show you is very beneficial for you to review and select buyers. I am going to share my desktop and allow you to see how this all works on our website. So this is the Albany Matchmaker webpage. You can see at the top that the easiest way to get there is [www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker](http://www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker). As we scroll down on this page, you'll see small business registration is now open. You can click through to registration here if you have not already registered. As part of the registration process, you'll be making your appointments for the matchmaker. I'm going to click on the buyer listing on this page. This is the 2013 Albany Matchmaker Buyer Listing version 4. As new buyers come in, we add them to this and update it. So this PDF lists out all of this year's participating buyers and what kind of products, services and certifications they are looking for. Some of the information in the next couple slides is pulled from this PDF.

The buyer names are hyperlinked so you can go to the different websites and learn more about the buyers. I would suggest using the buyer listing to research the buyers. After you've looked at the website and the buyer listing, you'll need to practice your elevator speech, a supply of brochures, business cards and something to write information down on. Come prepared to make your best presentation and take notes on what you learn that day.

So prior to the matchmaker, you create your appointment schedule at the registration site based on what buyers you want to meet with. You want to know that buying agency very well. I'll give you three examples of buyers that I research a little on my own to show you what I mean. So if I was in your shoes, for example, and I wanted to meet with CDTA because I had a product or service they are interested in. From the buyer listing, I visited their website [www.cdta.org](http://www.cdta.org) and viewed the Procurement Opportunities list to see what opportunities are available right now. There are pages of examples and it's a huge agency. They're looking for bus batteries, HVAC upgrades for different buildings, market research study,

and the full gamut of products and services. You can really learn a lot from their website. They also have a Guide to Doing Business with CDTA as another PDF on their website that tells you all of their guidelines in great detail such as how they award contracts, how they monitor contracts, and everything that's required when doing business with CDTA. So that's one example.

The next example that I looked into is SUNY. Obviously SUNY is a large buyer and when I look at the buyer listing I can see that there are a couple different versions of SUNY that will be at the event. As a NYS agency, if you look at their website, they will direct you to the Frequently Purchased Commodities & Services for the entire state of New York. You can go into that document to see what SUNY typically bought. When I looked at it, a lot of the items were furniture, food and beverage, and books, which makes sense based on what they do. They have a website called SUNY Means Business at [www.suny.edu/meansbusiness](http://www.suny.edu/meansbusiness). It talks all about how they do business with you, their policies and procedures, the certifications that they are looking for such as minority or women owned businesses. There is a lot of information you can find online.

Those were state and local agencies. I'd like to now show you a prime contractor. I also used this example last year because I think it's just such a great example. General Dynamics AIS is a prime contractor who provides products and services for our national intelligence community. The federal government buys from them and they in turn have a lot of sub work that they look for small businesses to partner with. The guidelines for doing business with them are very simple and when you go to their website you can see this is different than when you're dealing with a federal or state agency. This is a for-profit, large company and the culture is very much driven for results. They want to see in the people that they do business with a focus for customer satisfaction, time, quality, cost, and meeting their requirements. This is a very competitive culture, so you want to know and understand these buyers before you sit down with them and put your best foot forward. You want to make sure that they walk away with the impression that you can deliver in the culture they are trying to cultivate. You can see on this page that I've highlighted the keywords that I want to make sure I let the buyer know that I can deliver on in the meeting.

So those are three examples of buyers you can look at and you can research each buyer to get that level of information in a short amount of time. If you spend 10-20 minutes per buyer, I'm sure you can prepare yourself really well.

The next piece is the elevator speech. You want to have a really strong elevator speech and the reason this is so critical is because you don't have a lot of time. You're only going to have 10 minutes in front of the buyer so you'll need to perfect the elevator speech. Who are you? What business are you in? Talk about your products and services? Most importantly, why is your business product or service better than the rest? Why should they do business with you? I'm sure you are selling all of the time but this is just a good reminder to have that elevator speech down and ready to present when you get to the matchmaker.

So prior to the event, you're going to want to perfect your elevator speech, and think about how you want to spend the 10 minutes. This is an example or recommendation of what I think might work for

those appointments. If you've done the event in the past, this year is slightly different in that you will have a full 10 minutes with each buyer. There's a 10 minute appointment slot and you'll have a 5 minute break period to move. 10 minute appointment, 5 minute break, 10 minute appointment and so on. I suggest spending about 3 minutes introducing yourself and going over your elevator speech, and then 4 minutes describing details of your products and services and how they can deliver on what that buyer needs. The final 3 minutes can be used to wrap it up and make sure you capture any opportunities for follow up. Get a sense of how that buyer is feeling about your business and what opportunities are there so you know what you can do after the event to capitalize on any opportunity.

Let's talk about how it works the day of the matchmaker. You've done all the preparation; you've gone in and registered for either the morning or afternoon session. If you've registered for the morning session, check in opens at 7:30 am. If you've registered for the afternoon session, check in opens at 12 noon. When you check in, you'll receive the program for the day, a copy of your appointment schedule. It's wise to print out and bring a copy with you but we will have a copy just in case. In the event of a buyer becoming sick, we would try to have that change reflected in your appointment schedule.

Once you get your check in packet, you're going to want to get the lay of the land. There's a diagram in here that I will show you in just a minute. You'll want to know where the buyer rooms are, the speaker room for opening remarks, exhibitors, restrooms, etc. Please wear your nametag for the entire event. This helps us to know who belongs in each area. There will be door attendants at each buyer room which is something that is new for this year as well. I'll explain how that is going to work on the next slide.

This is a draft layout of how we're going to use the conference space this year. I'd like to highlight that this is a draft, not the final version, but it will most likely look something like this. This is where registration tables will be. We have an area in Salon A right next door for walk in registration for those who walk in the day of the event or if you need to print another schedule. We have a Speaker Room in Salons B and C where opening remarks will happen and important information will be shared, so you'll want to go there at 8:10 in the morning session for example.

New this year, we have broken down the buyers into separate rooms. You'll see them listed here as Buyer Room 1, Buyer Room 2, etc. The reason that we've done that is that we have so many buyers and suppliers in the room that it's gotten to be very loud. So we've done this to try to cut down on the noise level to make your appointments the best that they can be- where you can hear one another and have a good conversation without a lot of distraction. This is also going to allow us to control access to the buyer rooms and I'll talk to you about what that means. You're going to want to know where your buyers are located and the details will be in the event program. Let's say your first appointment is 8:30 am with CDTA. On this layout, you can see that CDTA is in Buyer Room 2. Prior to 8:30, you should go to the doorway of Buyer Room 2 and be ready. There will be a door attendant and he/she will check your schedule to confirm that you have an appointment with a buyer in their room at 8:30. At 8:30, the door attendant will allow all the attendees with appointments to go in and conduct their meetings. You will have a full 10 minutes to meet with your buyer. When your 10 minutes are done, the door attendant is going to clear the room and bring all small business attendees out of the room. You are only allowed

access to that buyer if you have a scheduled appointment with them. This is new this year and it's all about trying to respect your time and the buyers' time to make the most of the matchmaking experience.

This gives you an idea of how the conference area will be laid out. In the hallways, we will have our exhibitors as well. Looking at the agenda, you can see that the morning session timeline is 7:30 check in, 8:10 welcoming remarks, and appointments begin at 8:30. There is a break at 9:55, followed by more appointments and the morning session concludes at 11:35. The exact same agenda is repeated in the afternoon session which ends at 3:55.

Just to review, you'll get a copy of your appointment schedule at check in. If you lose it, please visit the walk in room to get another copy printed. If you are late or miss a scheduled appointment, it really cannot be made up. The buyers are going to be booked the entire day. If you don't show up on time, you may not be able to conduct your appointment. Two minutes after each appointment starts, the door attendant will allow a standby supplier to go in and meet with a buyer who does not have an appointment. So if you have an appointment at 8:30 with CDTA and you are not there at 8:32, but ABC Construction for example is standing by to meet with them, the door attendant will allow the standby supplier to go in and take the appointment. Please be on time! We've allowed a full 5 minutes to move so that should be plenty of time. Be aware that if you miss your appointment or you are late, you are forfeiting that opportunity.

We are very firm about the 10 minute appointment time limit. When we start the appointments, the buyer attendant is going to make sure that you do have an appointment in that room. At the end of the 10 minutes, the door attendant is going to clear the room of all small business attendees. Please be respectful of meetings in progress and considerate of those coming after you. We're clearing the room each time to ensure everyone gets the 10 minutes they are supposed to. I think the parameters we've put in place this year are really going to make sure you and the buyers are having the best discussions you can have.

Finally, networking at the matchmaker with exhibitors that will be in the hallway. We'll have many different types of exhibitors that will be at the event that can tell you about products and services that might be beneficial to your small business. We also have our government contracting experts: our agency (SBA) as well as PTACs, Empire State Development and their MWBE section, Defense Contract Management Agency, the Small Business Development Centers, and the Women's Business Center. You'll have counselors from these various agencies that you can speak with and get some information from and even set up follow up appointments to take advantage of their expertise to do the best you can do in your contracting efforts.

After the matchmaker, make sure you know how to follow up. You're going to get a ton of business cards and meet a lot of people. Be proactive and follow up. Do your best to understand how that particular buyer works, so that you know what method is best for that buyer. So that is it for this part of the session. I'm going to unmute the lines and take your questions now.

Q: When will this presentation be online?

A: Give us a couple of days. The recording link will be posted on the Albany Matchmaker website at [www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker](http://www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker). We'll have a recording of this webinar as well as future webinars. So give us a day or so to get it up there.

Q: I see ITT Exelis #1 and ITT Exelis # 2 on the buyer listing. Why are there two?

A: In this case, there are two different representatives looking for two different things. So please check the buyer listing or look at the buyer profiles in the online system to find the best match for your company.

Q: Is there a way to become an exhibitor?

A: Right now we have about 22 exhibitors, a combination of government contracting experts, area chambers of commerce, and various small business service providers. Please contact me after the webinar and I'll give the complete details. You can reach me at [erica.choi@sba.gov](mailto:erica.choi@sba.gov) or 518-446-1118 ext. 231.

Q: How well attended are these type of events?

A: Historically, they've been very well attended. In the past we have gotten to full capacity and sold out, which is why we moved to the Marriott and an am and pm session format to accommodate as many small businesses as possible. Every year we are able to get enough small businesses in the room to allow for probably 8 or 9 appointments per small business. We've had anywhere from 45 to 64 tables of buyers participate, so it continues to be a very well attended event.

I want to highlight a few things for you. The slide in front of you has the details for the next two webinars. Next Thursday at this time is ABCs of Government Contracting, which is a big picture government contracting webinar. Then on June 6 is a webinar specific to federal contracting. The same way that you connect today via phone and web would be how you connect to those as well. We'll also record them and have the links available on our website. Here's a reminder of the event website where you can find all the information: [www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker](http://www.sba.gov/albanymatchmaker). The event is at the Albany Marriott on Wolf Road on June 19. Thank you all for joining us. See you at the matchmaker!